

IN THE WORKS

TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON

October 2004

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GUIDANCE & TRAINING WILL HELP EASE REFORMS

Personnel reform means a lot of new things for state employees and managers to absorb in a very short time frame: new rules, new bargaining agreements, consolidated job classes, new choices for agencies (including the option to competitively contract), new forms and a brand new computer system to support all these changes.

Whew! That's a lot to understand and apply all at once. That's why the Washington Works partners — Department of Personnel (DOP), the Labor Relations Office (LRO) and the Department of General Administration (GA) — have teamed up to make sure agencies and employees will have the resources and training they need to be successful.

EXTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM PLANNED

Some training has already started, but most will take place over the next eight months. Timing is important—learning is most effective when it is applied right away—so training will be provided just in time for use.

The new evaluation tool (the Performance and Development Plan or PDP) now is available for use, so training currently is being offered. Change management is another topic that is applicable and training is available right now.

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CONTRACTS: NEXT STEPS

The economic terms of ratified contracts were submitted to the Office of Financial Management on October 1.

These cost impacts will be included in the Governor's biennial budget proposal to the Legislature in December. The Legislature will have an up or down vote on the cost of the agreements.

If the Legislature does not approve the funding request, the agreements may be renegotiated, in whole or in part. If approved, the terms of the negotiated master agreements will take effect on July 1, 2005.

The Labor Relations Office currently is working closely with the Department of Personnel to develop joint training on both the terms of contracts and the new civil service rules, which also become effective on July 1, 2005. ★

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WHY REFORM THE WHOLE PERSONNEL SYSTEM?

Existing work rules, labor agreements and contracting regulations no longer support the state's efforts to efficiently deliver services.

The old personnel system lacks the tools necessary to effectively hire, manage, and promote employees.

It denied employees the right to bargain on fundamental employment issues: wages and benefits.

And it limited opportunities for the state to be competitive by constraining contracting options.

It took the Legislature 12 years to pull together the labor and business constituencies needed to pass the 2002 Personnel System Reform Act, launching the biggest change to state government's personnel system in 40 years.

The goal of Washington Works is to replace our out-dated personnel system with one that can quickly address the challenges of state government's changing business needs.

In the new system, people who excel in their jobs can more easily be recruited, promoted and rewarded based on documented performance. That's better for employees and better for the state.

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Guidance Continued...

The new civil service rules and bargaining agreements won't apply until July 2005, so general information is being provided now and more in-depth training is planned for next spring. Human resource professionals will receive extensive training to ensure that they have the knowledge necessary to assist their organization through the transition.

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Different target audiences – including employees, managers, supervisors, and human resource professionals – have very different training needs and learning styles. Not to mention there are thousands of potential “students” scattered throughout the state.

That's why learning opportunities will be presented in a variety of ways, including traditional workshops, Web-based seminars (“Webinars”), eLearning courses, consultations, presentations, classes delivered within individual agencies or work groups, and guidance materials.

The guidance materials will include a variety of documents delivered online and in print that provide both general and more detailed information to help employees and agencies understand the changes and successfully apply the new tools and provisions.

The first of these materials include fact sheets that summarize the rules in specific areas, such as recruitment and selection, appointments and performance management. These now are available on the [DOP website](#). Additional fact sheets and more in-depth guidelines will be rolled out over the course of the next several weeks and months.

In the last issue of *In the Works*, we published the first in a series comparing practices within the current civil service system to new rules and other changes coming in July 2005. We will continue to publish these summaries, starting next month. Now that the collective bargaining agreements have been ratified, future comparisons also will cover contract terms.

FIND OUT MORE

Every effort will be made to ensure you have the information you need, when you need it. To keep informed, sign up for the [HR2005 listserv](#) and visit the [Washington Works](#) website. For a list of training that's available now, and what's planned for the future, go to the DOP [training site](#). ★

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In the Works is an electronic newsletter based at the Washington Works website: www.washingtonworks.wa.gov

ANSWERING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING QUESTIONS

***Note from the editor:** Because of the volume of feedback received during and after contract negotiations, we are not able to respond individually to email on the subject of collective bargaining. Instead, find responses to your most frequently asked questions below. Thanks to everyone who has used the Washington Works online feedback form to raise issues, make comments and ask questions.*

Q: Are all state employees members of a union by default?

No, not all state employees are members of a union. If you are unsure of your status, ask your agency Human Resource manager for assistance in clarifying whether or not you A.) Are a member of a bargaining unit represented by a union or B.) Are a member of a union.

Q: Are all state employees in bargaining units required to join a union and pay dues?

If you are a member of a bargaining unit represented by an employee labor organization (union), then the law allows the organization to require a fee for representation as outlined in [RCW 41.80.100](#).

Q: Do negotiated contracts apply to any Washington Management Service (WMS) employees?

No. WMS employees have, in the past, been part of bargaining units. However, beginning July 1, 2005, the law exempts WMS employees from collective bargaining. That means that bargained contracts will not apply to WMS employees. WMS employees will not be able to belong to a bargaining unit, though they can elect (if they choose) to pay membership fees and hold union memberships. Regardless, they will not be covered by the contracts.

Q: If I am not in a bargaining unit how will the proposed pay increases affect me?

For those employees (including all WMS and exempt staff) who are not represented by a labor organization (union), it is the Governor's role to decide what increases to include in the budget proposal to the Legislature, as has historically been the case.

The Legislature has the role of approving funding for any proposed increases. The Legislature must also approve the economic terms of the negotiated contracts for those employees represented by labor unions.

Reform continued...

The new option of competitive contracting has the potential to make government more effective, whether it's brought into play or not – because it gives employees the opportunity to redesign how they do their jobs in order to deliver better results to those they serve at a competitive price.

This year's contract negotiations marked the first time in Washington's history that state worker unions were able to bargain directly with the Governor for wages and benefits.

Now, a unified collective bargaining system focuses negotiations on critical employee issues, simplifies the bargaining process and reduces the number and complexity of contracts.

Many of the benefits of reform are long-term—it's about keeping state government viable and progressive.

It's about investing in our future state workforce by hiring the best and the brightest, and retaining our most talented and knowledgeable. It's about shaping public expectations and fulfilling our public service mission.

That's why we've tackled this challenge—a better workplace for state employees means a better government for Washington. ★

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For the purposes of estimating 2005-07 budget costs, the Office of Financial Management's six-year outlook applies the salary package in the negotiated settlements to all state employees (see the detailed six-year outlook at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/fiscal/outlook/index.htm>). However, it is still the Governor who decides what compensation changes to propose for non-represented employees in his budget submittal to the Legislature.

Q: Can I see a copy of my labor contract?

Though copies of all agreements should be available through your union (usually posted on their website), you can also access them here: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/labor/default.htm>

Q: If I have questions regarding my contract, whom should I contact?

If you are a member of a bargaining unit represented by a labor organization (union), it would be best to direct questions regarding the terms of your negotiated contract (which vary depending on your particular union affiliation) to your union representative.

Q: Where online can I go to view the 2002 Salary Survey?

The Department of Personnel's 2002 Salary Survey appears at:
http://hr.dop.wa.gov/ss2002/SSResults/SALARY_SURVEY_INDEX_PAGE.htm



WORK STARTS ON SECOND PHASE OF COMPUTER SYSTEM

While one team plows full steam ahead with work on the first phase of the new Human Resource Management System (HRMS), another team has already begun work on Release 2. One of the first tasks is to determine what will be required to support the new collective bargaining agreements.

Release 2 will add several new functions including training, e-recruiting, cost and compensation planning, and expanded employee self-service options. These additional functions will be available in August 2005.

Release 1, which will provide core payroll and personnel capabilities, is also moving forward at a rapid pace. In October, the project team proposed some adjustments to the implementation schedule to provide more time to develop and thoroughly test critical financial interfaces.

The new schedule will move the go-live dates out approximately eight weeks, to March and May of 2005. Even with this change of schedule, the new system will be up and running well in advance of the July 1, 2005 effective date for most of the Washington Works changes. ★

Have feedback? Email it to washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov

***Check out the WASHINGTON WORKS website at
www.washingtonworks.wa.gov for more information.***

Use the online [feedback form](#) to comment on any aspect of the reform effort.

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